



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 14, 2010

The United States is pleased to welcome Foreign Minister Saudabayev to the Permanent Council as the OSCE's 2010 Chairman-in-Office. We are also pleased that President Nazarbayev took the opportunity to address us this morning. Both of these statements underscore Kazakhstan's commitment to the OSCE and to a strong and successful Chairmanship.

The challenges facing the OSCE and the international community are real. Our strength comes from facing those challenges collectively, with a common purpose and a common determination to uphold the principles and commitments we have all made as members of the OSCE. We look forward to working with you to meet these challenges and to achieve the goal you spoke of, Mr. Minister, to modernize and strengthen the OSCE, for the benefit of all participating States. The United States also stands ready to encourage your efforts to lead by example and reflect in practice the principles and provisions of the organization you now chair.

We do indeed face a heavy workload this year based in part on the challenges you cite, including continuing our positive work on the Corfu Process, focusing particular attention to Afghanistan, and addressing the expectation of our Ministers in Athens that a decision to hold an OSCE summit must result from measurable and substantial progress on priority issues we face. In that respect, we applaud the Chair's commitment to ensure balance in each of the OSCE's three dimensions.

The United States has long made clear that the OSCE's work in the Human Dimension is a signal priority and one where implementation of commitments must be taken most seriously. Kazakhstan has a critical and important opportunity here. In the past several years, we have witnessed a stark increase in the dangers faced by journalists throughout the OSCE area and a shrinking space for independent, pluralistic media, particularly in the broadcast realm. Elections that fail to achieve transparency and reflect the will of the people have also been a source of concern. Judiciaries too often serve as a tool of the few rather than a safeguard for the rule of law. Fundamental freedoms of assembly, association, expression and religious belief are often denied to citizens in the OSCE area, including via burdensome registration requirements or selective application of laws. And too many members of minority communities in too many parts of the OSCE area – including the Roma – live in conditions that are unacceptable in modern, enlightened societies. For these reasons, among others, we strongly support your remarks today reconfirming Kazakhstan's commitment to the Human Dimension and reaffirming Kazakhstan's support for the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. In this vein, we welcome your emphasis on a constructive approach to election observation and monitoring. We applaud the Office for

Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for its objective work which continues to represent the best practices in election monitoring and we commend the partnership between ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The United States also joins your call, Mr. Minister, for continued dialogue on the future of European security and agrees that the OSCE is the best forum in which to continue these discussions. Your commitment to taking forward the Corfu Process – begun under the able leadership of the Greek Chairmanship – is essential to its success. The Russian Federation's proposals on European security architecture are a contribution to those discussions and we look forward to discussing them in that context. The OSCE is ideally situated to address these issues given its comprehensive approach to European security, which incorporates its economic, human and political-military aspects.

We look forward particularly to in-depth discussions on strengthening the OSCE's ability to both prevent and resolve conflicts. We also look forward to implementing concrete steps and projects to address mutual transnational threats that have changed the dynamics of European security and threaten all of us.

We also share your hope for CFE in 2010 and affirm that the United States remains firmly committed to finding a way forward that addresses the concerns of all State Parties and allows us to preserve the benefits of this landmark regime. We all know that Russia has not implemented the CFE Treaty for two years while other partners continue to do so. We urge Russia to look again at this issue. We also call upon all State Parties to fulfill their CFE obligations fully. With respect to the Vienna Document 1999, as we said in Athens, its confidence and security building measures are being implemented with a high degree of success. But there is room for improvement and we look forward to discussing ways in the FSC to make this instrument more effective. We also look forward to working with other States Parties to ensure that the Review Conference of the Open Skies Treaty, in Vienna under U.S. chairmanship in June, will be a success.

Likewise, we fully support your focus and personal intervention on the protracted conflicts in the OSCE region. We believe the OSCE has a meaningful role to play in stability within and along Georgia's internationally recognized borders. To that end, we, along with many other participating States, remain committed to the re-establishment of an OSCE presence there that respects Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. We also believe that the OSCE can continue to play a valuable role in efforts to resolve the Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts. We look forward to your leadership in resolving these long-standing issues and are pleased that one of your first official visits next month as Chairman-in-Office will be to the South Caucasus. We also look forward to your visit to Washington next month.

The United States also strongly supports your expressed focus, Mr. Minister, on seeking new ways to include Afghanistan within the work of the OSCE. That starts with enhanced bilateral efforts and we welcome Kazakhstan's generous allocation of 50 million dollars, in the face of pressing international financial circumstances, to fund scholarships for a thousand Afghan students in Kazakhstan.

We look forward to working with you and with the rest of our OSCE colleagues in implementing projects designed to strengthen Afghanistan's Central Asian borders and to curb violent extremism, radicalization and narcotics trafficking in the region. We remain convinced, Mr. Minister, that the most efficient and effective way to accomplish these goals

is for the OSCE to operate directly inside Afghanistan, and we hope to see that become a reality under your Chairmanship.

In the second dimension, promoting good governance at border crossings and facilitating trade is important to spur needed economic growth and job creation. Discussions on transportation and migration, as well as on the lessons learned from addressing environmental problems linked to the Aral Sea, are valuable opportunities to draw upon Kazakhstan's role in Central Asia.

Mr. Chairman, the enthusiasm of every member of your team – in both Astana and Vienna – has not gone unnoticed and bodes well for us all. This is exemplified in the cooperation that for the first time in recent memory led to our having a budget at the start of a new Chairmanship, a feat due in no small part to Kazakhstan's leadership.

We wish you, Minister Saudabayev, and your Mission here the greatest of success in the months ahead. The United States looks forward to supporting Kazakhstan's chairmanship at the OSCE – you can be sure of our support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.